



fourth year and spawns in secluded and obscure places during June and July. It builds nests and a parent guards the eggs and young.

### **Habitats**

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

### **Iowa Status**

common; native

### **Iowa Range**

statewide except north-central Iowa

### **Bibliography**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.

## **flathead catfish**

*Pylodictis olivaris*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Cypriniformes
Family:	Ictaluridae

### **Features**

The flathead catfish is dark to olive brown with darkish brown mottling on the sides, especially in younger fish. The head is broad and flat and the tail is square or slightly notched. The lower jaw is longer than the upper jaw. The anal fin has 15 to 17 rays. Like other catfish, it has four pairs of barbels (whisker-like projections) around the mouth, no scales, and an adipose (fat) fin located near the tail fin. It also has a spine at the front of the dorsal and pectoral fins. Adults grow to enormous size. The state record weighed 81 pounds and was 51 inches long.

### **Natural History**

The flathead catfish is a big river fish that is found throughout the border rivers and large interior rivers. It seldom is found in lakes but is stocked into some constructed lakes. It usually is in deeper pools of water with mud bottoms. Younger fish eat a variety of animal matter, but larger fish eat fish (either live or dead) almost exclusively. It matures in its third or